



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

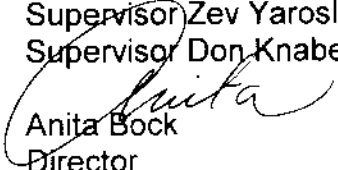
425 Shatto Place - Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

ANITA M. BOCK  
Director

January 29, 2001

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:  
GLORIA MOLINA  
YVONNE BRATHWAITE BURKE  
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
DON KNABE  
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH

To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From:   
Anita Bock  
Director

### JANUARY 16, 2001 BOARD MOTION REGARDING AUDITOR-CONTROLLER'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FAMILY PRESERVATION PROGRAM

This report is in response to your Board's January 16, 2001 motion instructing the Department of Children and Family Services to provide a detailed written plan addressing the recommendations contained in the Auditor-Controller's Family Preservation Program Review. The Department was also instructed to consider these recommendations, to the extent possible, in the development of the new Request for Proposals for the Family Preservation Program, to be released in late January. The Department has exhausted State and Federal time extensions for the competitive procurement of Family Preservation Program services, and must therefore release the RFP timely.

A detailed written implementation plan is under development. Attached is the Department's initial response to the Auditor's Report. Additionally, a consultant was hired to review and revise the draft RFP so as to incorporate some of the Auditor-Controller's recommendations. Most notably, a new rate structure has been developed, and the evaluation process has been revised substantially. The revised evaluation protocols and the new rate structure satisfy key Auditor-Controller recommendations. These and all other changes reflect the collaboration of the Auditor-Controller, County Counsel and the Department.

If you need additional information please do not hesitate to contact me, or your staff may contact Michelle Saulters at (213) 351-5787.

AB:EM:RRS:vm

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Auditor-Controller  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES  
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AUDITOR-CONTROLLER'S  
REVIEW OF THE FAMILY PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The implementation of all the recommendations contained in the Auditor-Controller's Report will take time to implement. Therefore, this is a work-in-progress. The Auditor-Controller has recommended only that certain changes be made to the current RFP regarding rate and evaluation components. The Department has satisfied those requirements. A specific implementation plan is under development to ensure that all the recommendations are fully implemented. In addition, the Department has the ability to make additional de-minimus changes to the RFP for a period of 45 days after its release, and thereafter during the contract negotiation phase. Once contracts have been awarded additional changes to the contracts can be negotiated should the need arise, and these can be incorporated via addenda to the contracts.

Finally, it should be noted that these contracts are only for a two-year term, with a one-year option to renew. In the event the Department wishes to make further significant changes at the end of the two-year cycle, the Department can issue a new RFP. It should also be noted that Federal Family Preservation Program funding is subject to re-authorization in September 2002.

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**RECOMMENDATION 1:**

**DCFS MANAGEMENT DEMONSTRATE ITS SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILY PRESERVATION PROGRAM BY PROVIDING STRONG LEADERSHIP AND BY INTEGRATING THE PROGRAM INTO THE DEPARTMENT'S CORE OPERATIONS.**

We concur with this recommendation and our current management will address the following concerns within ninety days: Family Preservation units in each Region; Family Preservation Training for DCFS Children's Social Workers, supervisors and managers; improve the 800 referral process and address the distribution of auxiliary funds.

**PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

**RECOMMENDATION 2:**

**DCFS MANAGEMENT MUST IMPROVE ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH LEAD AGENCIES BY ESTABLISHING MORE FREQUENT AND COMPLETE COMMUNICATION REGARDING THE PROGRAM.**

We concur with this recommendation and the Department will improve its partnership with lead agencies by conducting collaboration training workshops and all day retreats annually. This will be implemented within six months.

**OUTCOME MEASURES**

**RECOMMENDATION 3:**

**DEVELOP FPP GOALS THAT ARE CLEAR AND MEASURABLE.**

We concur with this recommendation and the Department is currently working with an Assistant Professor at the USC School of Social Work who has identified data to be collected by all lead agencies. This data will help develop measurable goals and outcomes for the FPP. This information is being included in the RFP.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:**

**ENSURE THAT THE PROCESS OF FPP DATA COLLECTION IS COMPLETED AND MAINTAINED IN THE FPP CHILD WELFARE SERVICES/CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SPECIAL PROJECTS TAB.**

We concur with this recommendation and to ensure that the process of FPP data is collected and maintained, FPP management has made modifications to the CWS/CMS database to include Family Preservation services, types of services and start and stop dates of services. On July 1, 2000, the Community Development liaisons began faxing all DCFS 800 forms to the Family Preservation Review Unit. Upon receipt of the DCFS 800 forms, Revenue Enhancement updated the CWS/CMS database with all Family Preservation referrals to ensure all data is collected for CWS/CMS special projects tab. The database will also be revised to collect information based on the new rate structure.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:**

**ENSURE THE RFP TO PROCURE AN EVALUATION OF FPP IS ISSUED.**

We concur with this recommendation and the FPP has completed the RFP for Family Preservation Program Evaluation Services. The successful proposer will conduct a process and outcomes evaluation of the County's Family Preservation Program, including all 28 contracted Community Based Family Preservation Networks (CFPNs). The Department expects to release the Evaluation RFP within 30 days.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:**

**UTILIZE THE EVALUATION FINDINGS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE VARIABLES THAT INFLUENCE PROGRAM SUCCESS.**

We concur with this recommendation and the FPP management is currently working with Dr. McCrosky, Dr. Solomon and all stakeholders to create a consistent format for all evaluations. This process is currently being implemented.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:**

**INVOLVE LEAD AGENCIES IN UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND IN DETERMINING A COURSE OF ACTION TO IMPROVE THE PROGRAM.**

We concur with this recommendation and the FPP staff will meet individually with the CFPNs quarterly to update each agency on the results of audit reviews and work with them to make any improvements reflected in the audit report. This will be implemented within six months

**RECOMMENDATION 8:**

**COMMIT TO THE PERIODIC EVALUATION OF THE FPP AND ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE PROGRAM DATA IS ROUTINELY CAPTURED, ANALYZED AND USED TO MAKE PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS.**

We concur with this recommendation and the FPP staff as stated in the aforementioned paragraph, will work closely with each CFPPN to ensure appropriate data is captured to make program modifications.

**RECOMMENDATION 9:  
CLARIFY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ITS RECENT PLANS FOR A PROGRAM EVALUATION  
AND THE LEAD AGENCY EVALUATIONS.**

We concur that clarification is needed for program evaluations and lead agency evaluations. The FPP management will incorporate standardized evaluations for each lead agency to ensure extensive program data is collected to provide information on specific program areas and to facilitate a more comprehensive analysis of program data. The evaluations from both DCFS and the Lead Agencies will produce similar data in that the outcome measures of the FPP will be identified. The Agency evaluation will be completed prior to the Department evaluation. Dr. Solomon has prepared the Agency evaluation, and plans to hand off her work to the Department's evaluator.

**PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

**RECOMMENDATION 10:  
REQUIRE FAMILY PRESERVATION PROGRAM STAFF TO REVIEW AND INCORPORATE ISSUES  
ADDRESSED IN THIS REPORT PRIOR TO FINALIZING THE FAMILY PRESERVATION POLICIES  
AND PROCEDURES**

As the audit notes, we have recently convened a committee comprised of FPP Program staff, Community Development Coordinators and lead agency staff to update the Policy and Procedures to reflect current practices. Before finalizing the Policy and Procedures, FPP Program staff will review and provide input to the document. This will ensure that our Department is consistent with operations. The process will be finalized within six months.

**RECOMMENDATION 11:  
CONSIDER THE ADVANTAGES OF CENTRALIZATION AND DETERMINE IF CENTRALIZED FPP  
UNITS IN EACH REGION COULD PRODUCE POSITIVE PROGRAM BENEFITS.**

We concur with the recommendation and have called for FPP operations to be centralized across our Department's eight regions. This will result in consistent interpretation and application of program operation. Furthermore, we have standardized the referral process by implementing case screening committees, front-end services, and court services for FPP in all our regions. This will allow CSWs to refer from the Family Maintenance/Reunification Program and Emergency Response. With the redesign of our front end services in our new Bureau of Child Protection we expect to see a substantial rise in the number of ER cases referred to Family Preservation.

All regions will have a dedicated FPP unit in which assigned CSWs will handle FPP cases. We believe that centralized FPP units in each region will produce positive program benefits. This process will be finalized within six months.

**RECOMMENDATION 12:**

**REQUIRE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COORDINATORS IN EACH REGION TO CONDUCT WEEKLY FPP CASE SCREENING COMMITTEES.**

We concur with the recommendation and management will require that each CDC conduct a weekly FPP case screening committee. This process will be effective immediately.

**RECOMMENDATION 13:**

**INCLUDE FPP AS A CORE MODULE IN TRAINING ACADEMIES PROVIDED TO NEWLY HIRED CSWs.**

We concur with this recommendation and management will establish a formal FPP training with the Department's Inter-University Consortium for CSWs supervisors and managers. This process will be completed within six months.

**RECOMMENDATION 14:**

**REQUIRE TRAINING ACADEMY STAFF, FAMILY PRESERVATION PROGRAM STAFF AND CDCs TO WORK TOGETHER TO DEVISE A STANDARD TRAINING SCHEDULE.**

We concur with this recommendation to develop a standardized training module for the Academy. In addition, the training committee will include personnel from the Training Academy, FPP Program, CDC staff, and CFPNs who will work together to devise the module. In addition, a comprehensive approach will be used to provide core and enrichment training programs to Family Preservation workers at DCFS and CFPNs. Also, in-service training modules focusing on the knowledge and skills necessary for family preservation interagency collaboration will be developed and provided to managers, Supervising CSWs, CSWs, and selected staff from community networks. This process will be completed within nine months.

**FPP AUTHORIZATION/REFERRAL**

**RECOMMENDATION 15:**

**DCFS MANAGEMENT SHOULD REVIEW THE FORM 800 APPROVAL POLICIES FOR CHANGES IN SERVICE LEVEL AND THE EXTENSION OF SERVICES AND DETERMINE IF ALL LEVELS OF MANAGEMENT APPROVALS ARE NECESSARY.**

We concur with this recommendation and will eliminate the required signatures of the Deputy Regional Administrator (DRA) and the Regional Administrator (RA) on the 800 form when changes in service level and the extension of services is required. This process will be completed within ninety days.

**RECOMMENDATION 16:**

**DCFS MANAGEMENT REQUEST THAT REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COMPLY WITH DEPARTMENT POLICY REGARDING FORM 800 APPROVALS.**

We concur with this recommendation. The elimination of certain required signatures mentioned above should expedite the extension process and increase compliance.

**RECOMMENDATION 17:**

**DCFS MANAGEMENT REQUIRE CSW'S TO COMPLETE ONLY THE FORM 800 TO EXTEND SERVICES.**

We concur with this recommendation and management will only require CSWs to complete the 800 for extension of services and will eliminate the supplemental document. This process will be completed within 90 days.

**SERVICE MENUS**

**RECOMMENDATION 18:**

**DETERMINE THE REASONS WHY SO FEW OF THE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES ARE ACTUALLY BEING PROVIDED.**

Combined response 18, 19, 20

**RECOMMENDATION 19:**

**BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THIS ANALYSIS, DETERMINE IF THE CURRENT MENU OF SERVICES IS APPROPRIATE OR IT SHOULD BE REVISED**

Combined response 18, 19, 20

**RECOMMENDATION 20:**

**IF THE CURRENT MENU IS APPROPRIATE, ENSURE MCPC PARTICIPANTS CONSIDER THE BROAD RANGE OF SERVICES WHEN TAILORING A FAMILY'S CASE PLAN**

As the audit notes many of the Auditor-Controller's recommendations are internal systematic changes that must be made with the Department. The Department has addressed the service delivery and the current menu of services by eliminating service levels in the rate payment structure. The Department has reviewed the service menu in conjunction with Stakeholders. We believe that full utilization of these services will occur. The base rate includes indirect costs (i.e., administrative), clinical director services, multidisciplinary case planning committees, and the in-home counselor (four visits per month). The fee for service rates will be used for a menu of services that will be selected to meet the particular needs for each family. The menu of services include:

- In-Home Outreach Counseling (in excess of the basic 4 visits)
- Counseling (substance abuse, domestic violence, anger management, and teen pregnancy)
- Parenting Training
- Self Help/Family Support Groups
- In-Home Emergency Caretaker
- Substitute Adult Role Model
- Teaching and Demonstrating Homemaking

- Transportation
- Drug Testing
- Child Focused Activities
- Child Follow Up Observation
- Discretionary Services/Items

DCFS will monitor the usage of these services to insure full utilization. The new base rate and fee for service rate structure is included in the RFP.

#### **CASE LEVELS**

##### **RECOMMENDATION 21:**

**MONITOR THE RELATIVE PERCENTAGE OF LEVEL I, II AND III CASES AND DETERMINE THE REASON (S) FOR THE TREND AND WHETHER SERVICE LEVELS ARE BEING APPROPRIATELY ASSIGNED.**

We concur with the recommendation. The Department has addressed the concerns surrounding the assignment of service levels and has decided to replace this model with a fee for service structure plus a base rate for mandated services. These services are approved at the MCPC. A new rate structure will assist in monitoring trends and services. This procedure will be implemented in the RFP for 2001.

##### **RECOMMENDATION 22:**

**CONSIDER THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THREE DISTINCT LEVELS AND MODIFY THE NUMBER OF LEVELS IF APPROPRIATE.**

We concur with the recommendation. The Department has addressed the concerns surrounding the appropriateness of service levels and has decided to replace this model with a base rate for mandated services and fee for additional services model. To be implemented in the RFP.

#### **PAYMENT RATES**

##### **RECOMMENDATION 23:**

**DCFS MANAGEMENT, AFTER IT HAS FINALIZED THE SERVICE COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM MODEL:**

- REVIEW THE CURRENT CAPITATED RATES TO DETERMINE IF THEY ADEQUATELY COMPENSATE LEAD AGENCIES FOR SERVICES PROVIDED.**
- CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A FEE-FOR-SERVICE RATE STRUCTURE IF THE NUMBER OF SERVICES IS LIMITED.**

We concur with the recommendation and the Department has addressed the service delivery and the current menu of services by eliminating the three service levels payment structure. A fee for service menu has been adopted and will be used with the base rate, as explained above.

#### **BUDGET**

**RECOMMENDATION 24:**

**REQUIRE BUDGET STAFF TO INCLUDE ALL PROGRAM EXPENDITURES IN THE FPP BUDGET, REGARDLESS OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THE EXPENDITURES ARE CLAIMED.**

We concur with the recommendation. Family Preservation management will convene with Budget and Finance staff to implement this recommendation in the RFP.

**RECOMMENDATION 25:**

**CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND DETERMINE IF THE PRESENT FUNDING LEVEL OF AUXILIARY FUNDS IS APPROPRIATE.**

We concur with the recommendation of examining the appropriateness of the current funding level of auxiliary funds. This recommendation will be implemented within six months.

**RECOMMENDATION 26:**

**EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF ALLOCATING THE TOTAL AUXILIARY FUND BUDGET AMONG THE REGIONS, INCLUDING BASING THE ALLOCATION ON THE RELATIVE PERCENTAGE OF REFERRALS.**

We support the recommendation of exploring alternative methods of allocating auxiliary funds including basing the allocation on the percentage of referrals by region. It is expected that this process will be reviewed and implemented during the six months.

**RECOMMENDATION 27:**

**ENSURE A CLOSER WORKING REALTIONSHIP BETWEEN PROGRAM AND FINANCE STAFF IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FPP BUDGET.**

We concur with the recommendation, and have implemented it in part. The Program and Finance staff hold quarterly team building meetings. It is expected that this recommendation will be discussed and implemented in full within the next six months.

**RECOMMENDATION 28:**

**REQUIRE PROGRAM STAFF TO RELEASE THE DETAILS OF THE BUDGET TO LEAD AGENCIES ON AN ANNUAL BASIS.**

We concur with the recommendation. Family Preservation management will coordinate with Budget and Finance management to implement this recommendation within the next six months.

**PROGRAM FUNDING**

**RECOMMENDATION 29:**

**REQUIRE STAFF TO KEEP FORMAL WAITING LISTS TO DETERMINE IF THE DEMAND FOR FPP SERVICES IS GREATER THAN OR LESS THAN AVAILABLE RESOURCES.**

We concur with the recommendation. The Family Preservation program staff will develop and implement a procedure for capturing the demand for Family Preservation Services within the next six months.



**RECOMMENDATION 30:  
ALLOCATE FPP FUNDING AMONG THE GEOGRAPHICAL SERVICE AREAS BASED ON THE  
ACTUAL NEED FOR SERVICES.**

We concur with the recommendation and Family Preservation management currently allocates funds based on the number of children in out of home care within a geographic service area. DCFS will continue to evaluate alternative methods of funding, but at this time the Department believes that the present method is appropriate. If DCFS evaluates the Program and determines that certain populations have better success, future allocations will be based on this.

**RECOMMENDATION 31:  
CONSIDER INCORPORATING PROGRAM CHANGES THAT RESULT FROM THE RECOMMEN-  
DATIONS IN THIS REPORT INTO THE RFP.**

Recommendations have been incorporated into the RFP as indicated in the responses above.